

EDUCATIONAL WORK
OF THE
CLEVELAND MUSEUM
OF ART



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SOME PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE EDUCATIONAL WORK

1. A friendly atmosphere in the Museum tends to put visitors into a frame of mind favorable to the enjoyment of the collections.
2. The prime educational factor of a museum of art is the enjoyment of the beauty of the works of art exhibited therein. On the other hand, wonder at rarity or cost may be destructive of true taste; and interest in scientific or historical classification is a danger to the enjoyment of beauty unless so directed as to contribute to it.
3. Associations with a work of art, whether they be historical, scientific, or merely pleasurable, contribute to the aesthetic experience thereof.
4. Knowledge of technical processes adds a distinct source of enjoyment to, and clarifies the understanding of, a work of art; but it may substitute a pleasure in science for a pleasure in art.
5. Aesthetic response to works of art may be aided by arousing, through printed or spoken word, the attention of the observer.
6. Technical experience, such as drawing, is of value both as a release of motor response to form and as a means of making active the attention. Analytical drawing, looking back and forth from paper to object, is in danger of blocking processes both of creation and of appreciation, unless balanced by synthetic drawing, either from memory or from imagination.
7. Analysis of a work of art is valuable in clarifying, and so deepening, the experience of the observer; but it is in danger of destroying the unity essential to beauty.
8. An atmosphere of freedom is as important for children's learning as for children's enjoyment. It is important for adults, including the Museum instructors.
9. In dealing with children, who lack the mental power and the knowledge of adults, one may depend upon keen sense impressions of shapes and colors, upon a ready capacity for coordinating knowledge, an eager curiosity, and a lively imagination.
10. History, science, and arts other than those exhibited may be illuminated by a museum of art.

April, 1927



EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART



THE Museum has adopted as its purpose the fostering of "a love and knowledge of art in the community," as stated in the will of one of its founders. Its primary function is twofold: the collecting of objects of art representing the endeavor of all peoples and all times; and having come into possession of such treasures, the study of them, and the preparation of them for exhibition so that while they are protected, they may still be of service to as many people as possible.

Purpose

The Cleveland Museum of Art has always laid particular emphasis on its primary function of collection and exhibition. It makes purchases only for definite reasons, and safeguards the future by accepting as gifts only objects of fine quality. It is the aim of the staff to exhibit the collections in such a manner that each gallery and wall and case may be a harmonious setting for each object exhibited. The total effect of the Museum, its atmosphere, seems to justify this procedure.

Function

Exhibitions

The Museum presents, through purchases and gifts, many phases of art besides painting; and a series of galleries is maintained for the representation of various aspects of art. In addition to these more or less permanently arranged galleries, assigned to certain types of art, other galleries are set aside for temporary exhibitions, largely of modern works which are intended to keep Museum visitors in touch with contemporary art.

*Relations to
the Public*

Having chosen and exhibited works of art, the Museum aims to establish an increasingly close relationship between the public and the collections. It issues a monthly Bulletin to arouse interest in, and to promote a knowledge of, these collections. In addition, the Museum has published a Handbook of the Museum and several other pamphlets and leaflets, as well as books. In its labeling it tries not merely to identify the objects, but where feasible by some descriptive suggestion to arouse the attention of the observer.

To arouse the attention is of the first importance in developing appreciation. Perhaps the greatest barrier between the casual observer and the enjoyment of a work of art is the habit, so useful in practical life, of looking at an object only to find out what one wants to know. A man can seldom describe the face of his watch, for nature has so safeguarded his nervous energy that he can see what time it is without seeing anything else. But in an art museum the habit of economy of attention must be altered. It is at this point that the Department of Education may begin its work.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL WORK

If the educational staff is to teach, it must study. Time is freely allowed for library work, and the instructors are frequently granted leave of absence for study abroad. The staff must also have an opportunity for gaining a common understanding, though not necessarily a complete agreement, as to aims and practices; this need is met in weekly staff meetings. The theory of art appreciation, problems of form and draughtsmanship, as well as practical means of teaching, are among the subjects studied and discussed.

*Staff
Preparation*

WORK FOR ADULTS

Guidance, or docent service, through the Museum collections is the most direct impulse to appreciation which the Educational Department can give. It implies not merely choosing for consideration the works adapted to the interest of the person or group, but such correlation of exhibits as will give a certain continuity to the visit, avoid the fatigue caused by an excess of unrelated impressions, and at the same time give each object its due importance as an individual work of art.

Guidance

To give an object its due importance the attention may well be directed to its aesthetic elements and such information given as will enrich the experience derived from it and deepen the sense of pleasure. The gallery talks prove valuable, too, in destroying prejudice—chiefly preconceived notions about what a work of art should be—and in adjusting the mind of the visitor to some unaccustomed style of art, unaccustomed possibly because it is new, possibly because it is old, but in any case one that

affords a fresh field of enjoyment. Use of this service of guidance is made by women's clubs, conventions, groups of commercial or industrial workers, college students, and art students, as well as, to a small extent, by the interested adult who may be visiting the Museum for an hour.

*Classes
& Study
Groups*

Classes, which are free to members, meet in the Museum each week, for such courses as Gothic Architecture or Renaissance Painting. Groups have been organized for work in various fields of art. Classes of undergraduates from the College for Women of Western Reserve University come for study of textiles in connection with courses in History and Household Administration.

*Public
Lectures*

Among the thousands of visitors to the Museum on Sunday afternoons, there are some hundreds who are glad of an hour in the lecture room to hear a talk on some phase of the Museum collections, perhaps a special exhibition or some addition to the permanent collection. Occasionally there has been a travel talk to furnish background for the exhibits, or even, at times, a lecture on a field of art outside the usual scope of the Museum, thus supplementing the collections.

A further opportunity is afforded by four courses of lectures, free to the public, given each year from October to April, on the first, second, third, and fourth Fridays of the month respectively. These courses are given by members of the staff and by visiting speakers. The lecture subjects have included the principles of art appreciation, the history of painting and sculpture, architecture, landscape gardening, the decorative arts, and music.

The Textile Study Room, in addition to being used as a center for students who wish to study textiles and textile design, serves for the present as a Conference Room for clubs and adult groups who wish to meet in the Museum under the leadership of a staff member.

*Textile
Study
Room*

Extension courses of The Cleveland School of Education are conducted by members of the Museum staff,—an introduction to European culture through its art, methods of teaching art appreciation, and a course in interior decoration being typical. Lectures are also given at The Cleveland Institute of Music, not on music, but on periods of marked artistic development, the knowledge of which is as necessary to the student of music as to a student of art.

*Colleges &
Professional
Schools*

Classes from The Cleveland School of Art, Western Reserve University, and The Cleveland School of Architecture come to the Museum for the study of certain Museum objects, or for talks on some phase of art which will quicken interest and understanding of the historic periods with which the classes have been dealing.

The Department of Educational Work recognizes the possible service of the Museum to the commerce and industries of the community. The activity in this direction has been limited partly by the size of the staff in proportion to the service waiting to be performed and partly by the fact that the collections are not to any large extent adapted to such service,—except in the field of textiles. While there is certainly such a thing as general training in taste, it is long, broad, and unattractive to a department store buyer seeking vocational aid for his salesfolk. For

*Commerce
&
Industry*

furniture salesmen the buyer rightly wants furniture which will build up a background of visual memories against which each new piece of merchandise will be seen and by which it will to some extent be judged. Despite limited material in this field, a series of lectures is being given regularly at one of the leading stores; and as the collections and the staff increase, the department looks forward to more work of this sort.

WORK WITH CHILDREN

*The
Children's
Museum*

The greatest educational opportunity is with children. Two rooms are set aside for their use. One of them is a class room, devoted to classes from the public schools under the direction of two teachers, paid by the Board of Education and appointed by it in coöperation with the Museum. The other is a children's museum.

The purpose of the Children's Museum does not differ from that of the Museum of Art as a whole: to provide beauty for the enjoyment of children that they may develop "a love and knowledge of art." This implies that the beauty provided must actually give pleasure, and that it must be adapted to the child's susceptibilities.

To the child much more than to the adult, knowledge is one. Beauty, romance, history, and science are not kept in separate compartments of the child's mind, but freely contribute to one another. The appeal in the Children's Museum is made through all of these elements.

Arranged for beauty of color and design without scientific significance, a panel of moths and bright butterflies attracts crowds of children, who attempt to translate the

beauty of these creatures with colored crayons, thus proving the child's delight in pure sense impression.

A series of nature groups by Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Thayer shows birds and insects in their natural environment, and interprets their colors and patterns as protective devices of nature. An interest in the utility of this phase of nature's appearance adds a pleasurable association to the child's sense of the beauty of the creatures. It also leads the child to a closer observation of the colors and patterns of nature. The very brilliance of the lights, the glow of color in the models, stimulate his interest as soon as he enters the Children's Museum, and help to make him feel that he is in a place designed for his uses and preferences,—that he is at home in an otherwise adult institution.

Ethnological models by Dwight Franklin, of which there are two series, arouse much interest among the children. There is a series of three showing life in the remote regions of the earth, Esquimaux attacking a polar bear, Arabs and camels at an oasis in the desert, and a primitive home in the tropical jungle. Adjacent exhibits show the forms of art produced by people living in these regions. Another series of six shows the development of prehistoric man, suggesting the artistic impulse which has had a part to play in his evolution. The child's interest in these things is at first one of romance, then of concern as to the life and art of these strange folk, from whose early struggles came the later art of civilized peoples. The history of man assumes a new unity when revealed in the museum exhibits, from the ape man

through the stone ages, the dynasties of Egypt, classical antiquity, and the middle ages, down to our own day. Art Museums have always embraced archaeology, and the child is a natural archaeologist.

Besides art exhibits shown in connection with the geographical models, there are in the Children's Museum frequently changing exhibitions of art which possess special interest for children; animal sculptures, Japanese dolls, illustrations from children's books,—things that, as far as may be, speak to the children in their own language. There are also children's books on the table and color games for smaller children. The furniture is scaled down to child size.

Drawing

One of the most profitable exhibits has been a group of reproductions of drawings of old masters and modern masters. These have started children drawing and given them ideals of expression. These ideals have not discouraged the children as being far beyond their ability, but have rather encouraged them to draw. Copying as a habit might tend to kill original drawing, but the children do not habitually copy. The very little ones do not copy at all; the older ones only to begin with, or occasionally, gaining from the master a feeling for line and technique which they straightway apply to something else, a Gothic statue or a Byzantine ivory. Perhaps this freedom from mere copying is due to the staff members; the same material in other hands might work quite differently. And yet the same reproductions of drawings and prints when lent with drawing materials to branch libraries of The

*Drawing
in Branch
Libraries*

Public Library have been the means of discovering genuinely creative talent.

The children's readiness to use pencil or colored crayons is of great importance: first, because drawing requires active attention to the work of art from which the child is drawing; second, because it increases the child's sense of contours and forms; and third, because it gives him a keen pleasure and feeling of ownership of the collections.

So the children are offered materials and encouraged to draw. They draw everywhere in the Museum, returning to the Children's Museum for comment. Staff members give little criticism; they praise what they can, perhaps suggesting another look at one point to see if the child has caught the sense of it. Or they suggest drawing the same object from memory, then returning to compare the forms. Drawing from memory is encouraged because it challenges intense observation and recalls the whole work of art with its unconscious emotional value. It also initiates self-criticism.

The drawings made at the Museum are filed according to the age of the child. Work which shows special individuality is filed under the name of the child. The department has records of some children going back seven years. The oldest, whose record began when he was fourteen, is now studying art in New York; the youngest, whose record began at two, has yet to face the crisis of adolescence. All of these personal collections are forming an invaluable record of the development of individuals.

*The Incipient
Scholar*

But the Museum is not primarily a place to draw. Drawing has played so important a part in the Children's Museum, first because children are creative animals rather than contemplative, and second because the head of the Children's Museum is an artist. The non-drawing child is welcomed, his questions are answered if possible, he is sent on quests in the galleries, and offered books. The classes of members' children have been given a good taste of history and archaeology, and they are eager for it. But the incipient scholar has not been given the organized help offered the young artist. Such work remains to be done, and the staff has some tentative plans to try out.

*Classes for
Members'
Children*

Some six classes of the children of members of the Museum meet on Saturday morning for drawing and study of the Museum collections. There are also two classes in modelling. This work is done not in competition with the children's classes of The Cleveland School of Art, but it is complementary and contributory to them. In general—though stated too simply—it may be said that the Art School children look in order that they may draw and model; while the Museum children are encouraged to draw and model in order that they may more deeply see.

In addition to the classes, a multitude of little proletarians draw in all parts of the Museum on Saturday mornings, with access to an adviser, who is stationed in a convenient place on the ground floor. Some of these do remarkable work and are not infrequently admitted to the Advanced Drawing Classes. A group of them put forth definite effort with this end in view.

Pupils with unusual ability, selected from the elementary schools, the branch libraries, and the Children's Museum, are given special instruction in the Advanced Drawing Classes, which also meet on Saturday mornings. There are two of these free classes to which children gain admittance by means of a competition held each September.

*Talented
Children*

The department follows these children after they have graduated from the Saturday morning classes and sends the most promising to The Cleveland School of Art with scholarships for those who need them. These scholarships are provided through the generosity of the Art School and certain clubs, and by the Museum. A group of older boys and girls, many of whom have gone on to the School of Art from Museum classes, meet in the Museum one Sunday a month for a talk on some art subject: a practical demonstration of etching or lithography, the making of woodcuts, or perhaps an experiment with textile or poster designing. The purpose of this Graphic Club is to keep the boys and girls in touch with the Museum after their immediate connection has been severed, and to give them assistance with individual problems.

*Graphic
Club*

As Saturday is a day of recreation for children, the Museum offers them entertainment, partly to attract them to the Museum, partly to give them pleasant associations with the place, but always to contribute to the children's acquaintance with beauty in art or nature. Usually there is a brief period of singing followed by an illustrated talk, a puppet or shadow show,—given by the children whenever possible, and frequently worked out in connection with the Museum as regards costumes, scen-

*Entertain-
ments for
Children*

ery, and properties. Thus the Museum collection serves to make history or literature real, and the performance adds vitality to the children's relation to the collection.

At four o'clock on Sunday children gather in two groups for a "Museum Hour"; children from five to seven are told a simple story illustrated by clever drawings and cut-outs and also by their own drawings, which they make at the conclusion of the period; children over seven are sometimes given an illustrated talk, but more often they are told a myth or folk tale which relates to some Museum object or group of objects.*

*Public
School
Classes*

The opportunity for the most systematic work is with the public schools. The school authorities have from the beginning recognized the auxiliary power of the Museum and have coöperated with it in every way.

Two teachers of the Cleveland Public Schools are attached to the Museum, and a third is to be appointed for the coming year. Each month the two teachers have made it possible to give some seventy-five classes a short half-day at the Museum. It is the purpose of the public schools to use the Museum for visual instruction at points where it may serve better than material that can be shown in school classrooms, notably in connection with courses in the arts, history, and literature.

Coöperation with art teachers is taken for granted, as the art teacher's natural interests lead her directly to the Museum; special attention is given to close coöperation with superintendents of elementary and junior high schools. This is done to insure the broadest possible use

*Some of these stories under the title "The Golden Bird," by Katharine Gibson, are to be published in the fall of 1927 by The Macmillan Company.

of the Museum for visual material in subjects other than the arts. The Museum has not stepped out of the bounds of its field in supplementing history and literature. Art museums have always so served from the time they first arranged their galleries by period and country. We believe that we are less likely to confuse aesthetic and scientific purposes if we designate each by its own name.

So it is, when a class comes for a lesson on armor, the instructor is conscious that in giving her historical introductory talk on the development of arms and armor, she is teaching history. But she knows that in re-creating ancient castles and battles she is enriching the art experience through the historical,—thus building a group of associations and recalling others which vastly contribute to the children's pleasure in the actual steel harness. When she shows the class a fine Renaissance helmet and tells them how it was beaten into form, she is embodying a knowledge of the armorer's craft in a sense of the finished work of art, using knowledge for a definite aesthetic purpose. When the children take pencils and draw the helmet, they are expressing a response to the beautiful Renaissance contours, a response which must stand them instead of running their fingers over the curved surfaces of polished steel.

Some thirty subjects have been prepared by the public school instructors; and in arranging schedules, the instructor sends to principals a list of suggestions for lessons. The principal is free to choose one of these or she may make a special request which will meet some particular school problem. Such requests are always acceded to

if they fall within the province of an art museum. The principal or teacher sends a return post card stating her choice and the time she wishes to bring her class to the Museum. Though the initiative has come from the Museum instructor, the response has been ample and voluntary, and the choice of subject as unhampered as possible. In addition to scheduled classes, a large number of talks are given outside the Museum in response to requests from grade and high schools.

The work will always be experimental—not in the sense of question as to its value, which is proved by the interest of the pupils and the great number of children who return on Saturdays and Sundays, but in the development of its greatest usefulness. The coming year, with its enlarged scope, will bring about a fuller knowledge of how the Museum may best serve the schools.

LENDING EXHIBITIONS

Even were the use of the Children's Museum developed to the utmost capacity, the majority of the children of Cleveland would visit the Museum but three or four times during their whole schooling; and it is clear that the service of the Museum would be vastly increased if its collections could circulate like books from a central library. Such circulation is obviously impossible for works of art which are either very bulky or very rare, but there comes to the Museum some material which is small, light, and not irreplaceable if lost. This material has been organized and augmented for the purpose of lending to libraries and schools.

The work began with the libraries for the reason that the Cleveland library system with its forty branches offered a limited field and demanded no such systematic series of exhibits as would be required by schools. It was not long, however, until requests from schools widened the scope of the undertaking.

Organized exhibits are placed monthly in cases in some fifty libraries, schools, and other institutions of greater Cleveland. They serve first as reminders of the Museum and invitations to visit the main collections; second as actual visual material enjoyable in itself. In libraries, so far as possible, exhibits are arranged with the librarian in reference to topics being studied in near-by schools or with regard to the interests of the neighborhood. In schools, exhibits are arranged with direct reference to class work, a schedule of exhibits being worked out with principal or school librarian.

Certain material—not fragile or irreplaceable—is lent for classroom use, to be handled by teachers, and by pupils under the teacher's supervision. Such material goes to high schools, to junior high or elementary schools whenever there is need and interest. The collection available for this purpose is growing steadily, though it is difficult to secure suitable material.

EDUCATIONAL WORK OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS

The educational work of the Museum is not limited to this special department. The Department of Musical Arts is primarily educational in its purpose, not only through the character of its organ recitals, performance of

*Department
of Musical
Arts*

chamber music, and historical programs,—but in its lectures and exposition of the music performed. It also conducts classes in music appreciation for children, students, and adults; and it coöperates with the Department of Educational Work in children's entertainments.

The Library

The Museum Library, a necessary equipment for the staff, also opens its reading room to the public, lends lantern slides and lanterns, photographs, and other pictorial illustrations. It affords, as well, constant advice and reference service to the public.

All of the activities discussed in this paper have been intended to extend the acquaintance and make more intimate the relation between the public and the works of art afforded by the Museum. As knowledge of the Museum has grown among the people of the community, it has led to further services. School officers meet at the Museum for conferences; teachers meet for demonstrations of teaching art appreciation both through the collections and through drawing; clubs seek consultation in preparing programs for the season's study; parents seek advice regarding the art education of their children; and social workers come for consultation in many connections. As such service usually is in response to an immediate need, its value is direct and important. But the greatest educational factor of the Museum must always be the enjoyment of the works of art; and it is the chief service of the Department of Educational Work to develop this enjoyment among the people.

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